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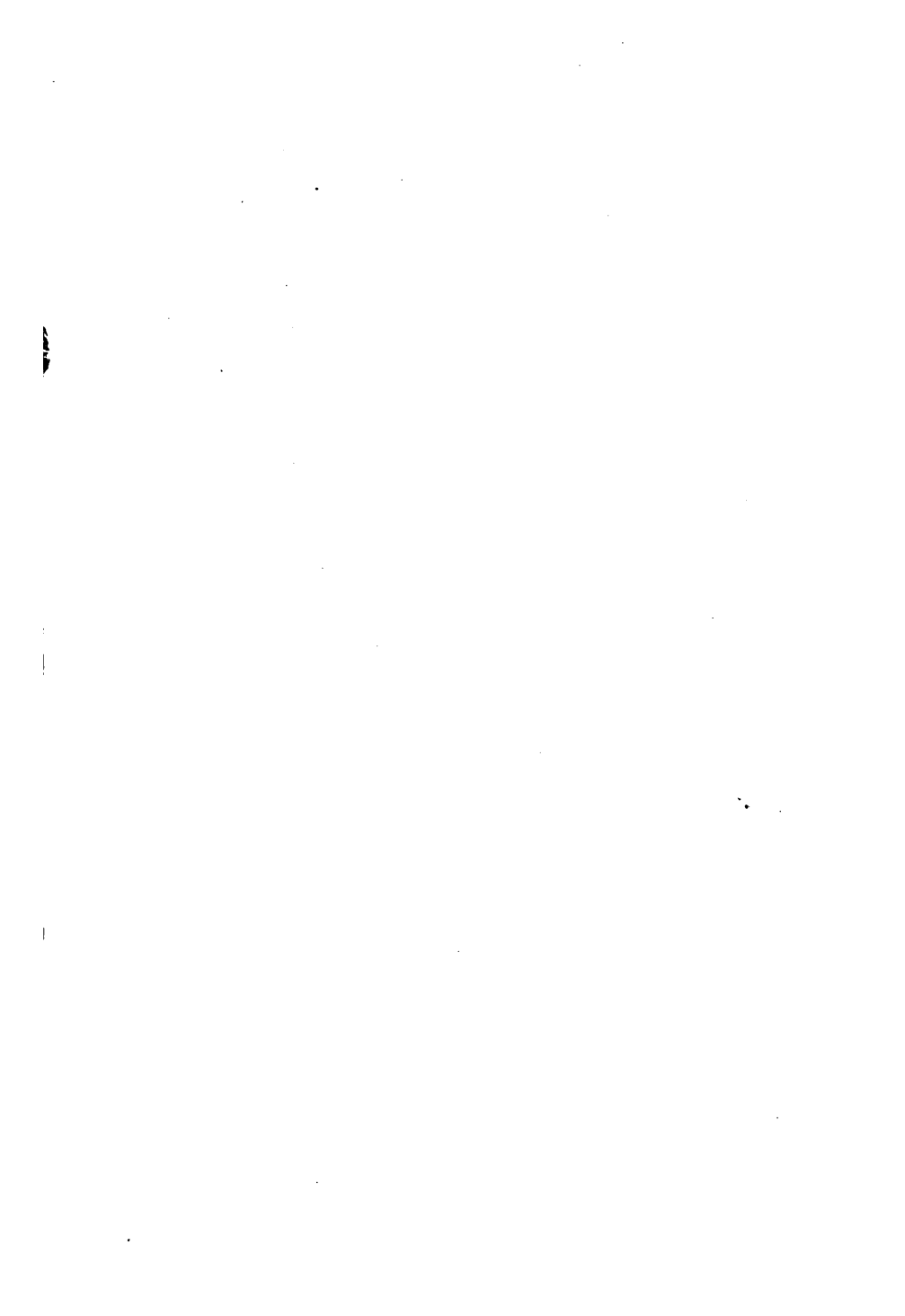
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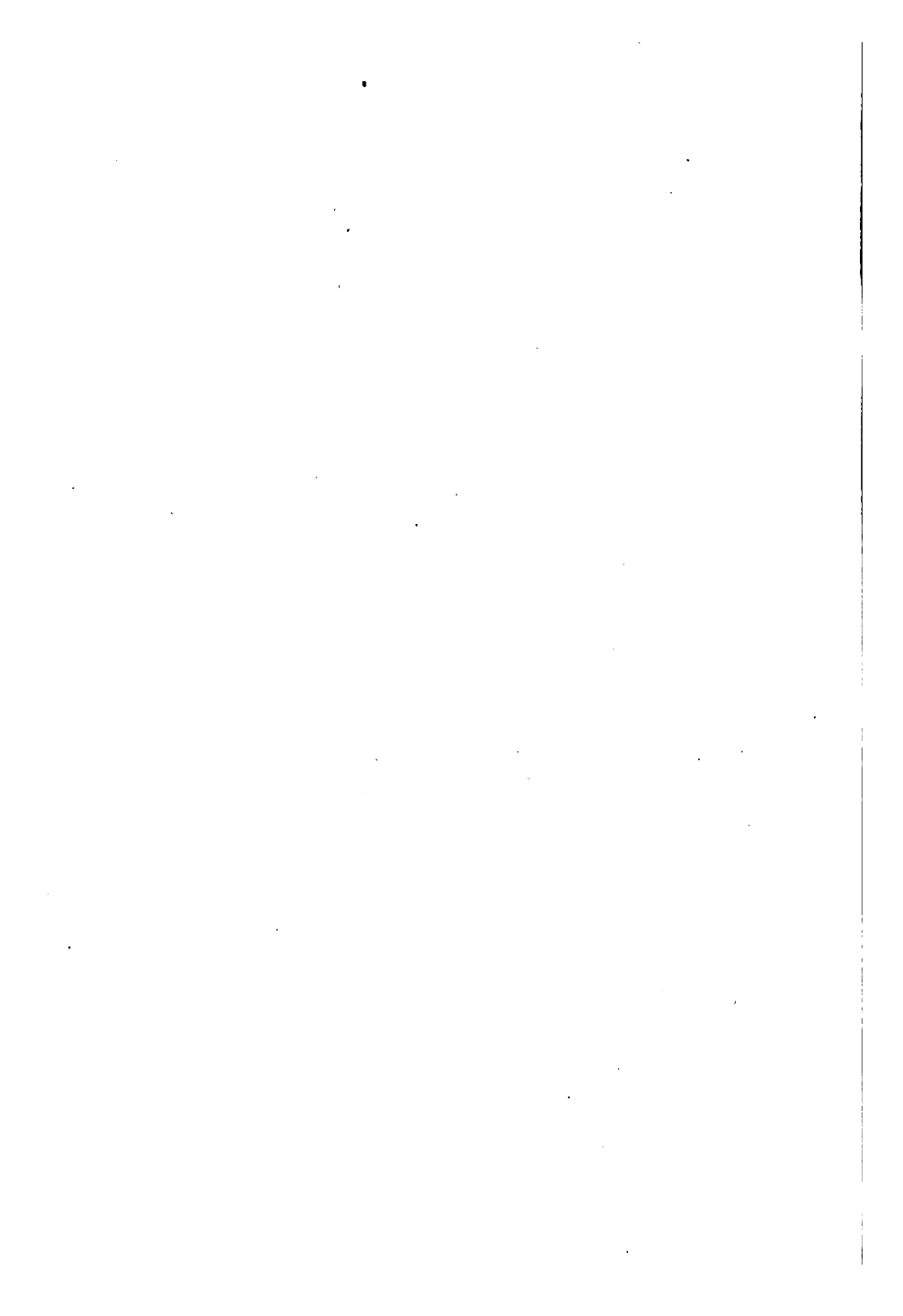
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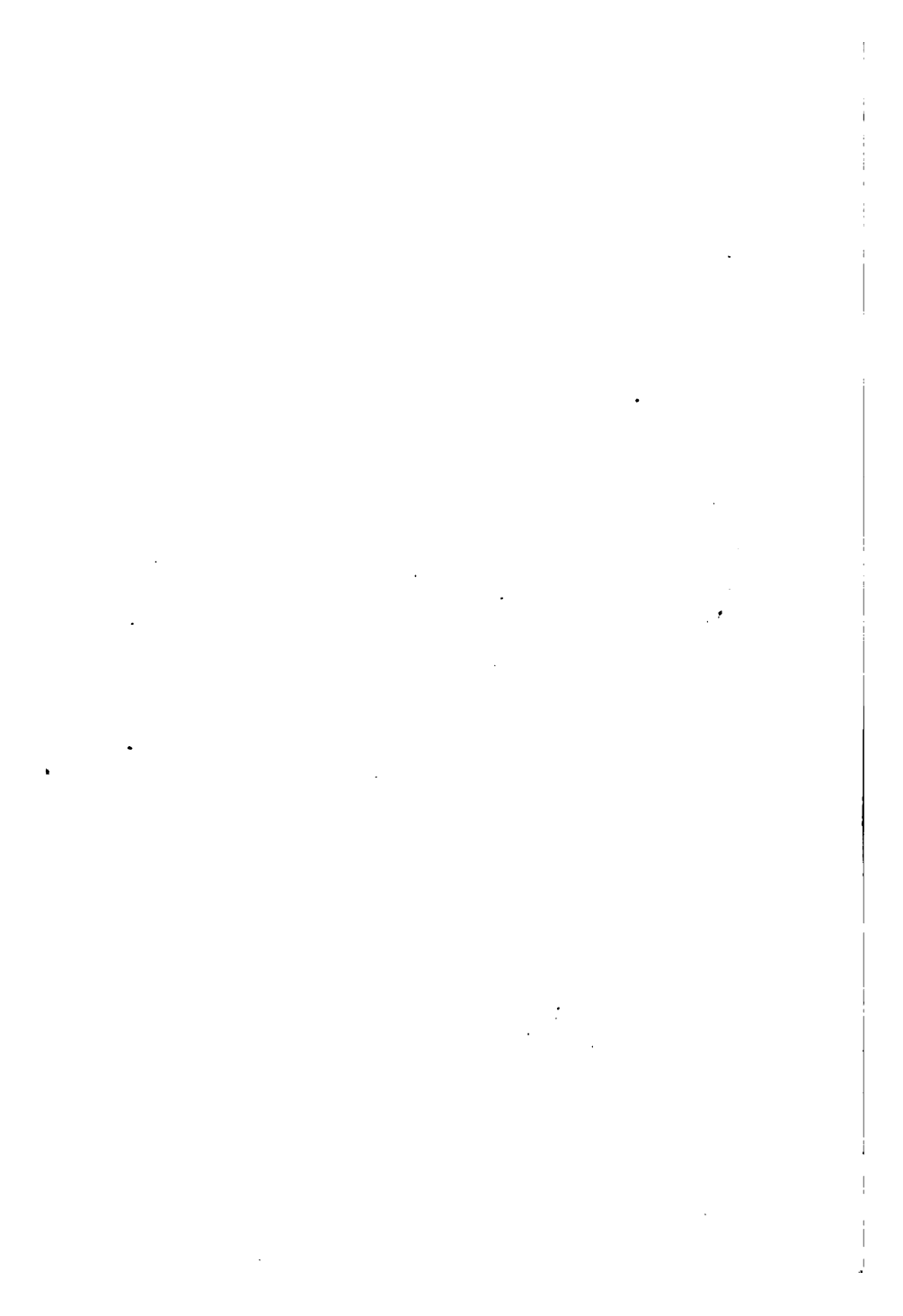
NOT BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE FIGHT AT DAME EUROPA'S SCHOOL"







CIVILIZED CHRISTIANITY.



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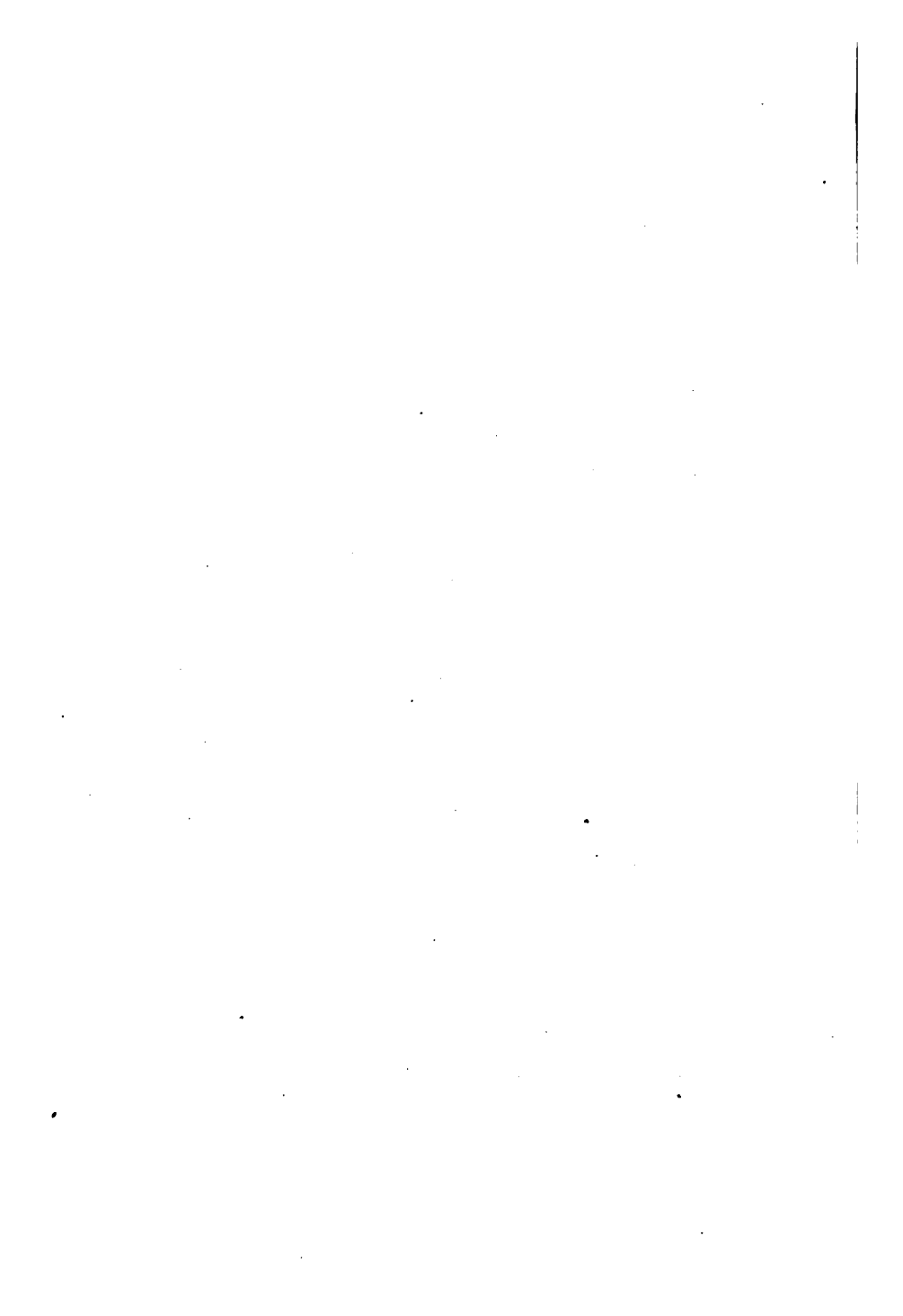


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CIVILIZED CHRISTIANITY.

A BRIGHT autumnal sun was shining on a lovely and well kept garden, belonging to a handsome country house in one of the most beautiful western counties of England. The French windows of a morning room were thrown open on the broad terrace, and the sole occupant of the room (a lady of gentle and pleasing appearance) was seated just inside the window, leaning back in a low easy chair with some needle-work in her hand. The room was elegantly and handsomely furnished, and in a manner which showed that its possessor had refined and cultivated tastes: a few excellent and well chosen engravings adorned the walls, and a harp, as well as a pianoforte, formed part of the furniture of the room; a table covered with drawing materials had evidently been left undisturbed from the day before, and a group of flowers was lying on it arranged for

copying ; a little work-table stood by the side of the lady, and upon it was a square thin book in a brown binding, which seemed to have been the subject of her studies.

The view from the window was as lovely an one as the eye could rest upon ; the spacious garden occupied the slope of a little valley, and was bounded by a belt of those ancient and well-nurtured trees to be seen in the parks of our country gentry : a broad river flowed at the bottom of the valley, and the opposite hill was varied with wood and pasture, and studded with corn fields, either waving in golden richness in the glorious sunshine, or newly cut and bound up in sheaves ready to be carried away. And beyond, the Welsh mountains could be seen stretching range over range, until the outline of the most distant one mingled with the blue sky.

But though the lady was sitting in front of this glorious view, and was indeed gazing earnestly upon it, the expression of her countenance was not in unison with the peaceful scene ; there was an anxious and troubled look upon her face, which seemed as if it did not belong to her habitual expression, and her brow

was knitted as if she were trying to solve some puzzling problem. Her work (a child's frock which she was embroidering) appeared to give her no pleasure ; indeed, it seemed in some way connected with her perplexity, for she tossed it impatiently upon the table, and took up the little book, turning over the leaves till she came to a passage which she was earnestly reading, when the voices of children made her raise her head ; her thoughts, however, did not seem to become brighter as she listened to the merry sounds, indeed her expression was still more troubled and even sad, and she leaned her head on her hand while the tears filled her eyes.

A step along the terrace roused her from her reflections, and the figure of an elderly and white-haired clergyman stood before the window. "Good morning, Mrs. Leslie," said he in a cheerful tone. "And it is indeed a *good* morning : I have been thinking, as I looked at the view from this terrace, that it must have been just such a morning as this is when David wrote that beautiful Psalm, 'Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness ; Thy clouds drop fatness. The little hills rejoice on every side ; the valleys also stand so thick with corn that they

shall laugh and sing.' Nature seems to be rejoicing in yielding up her richest stores, in gratitude to God and men for all the care and labour bestowed upon her. Such a scene as the one before us makes us marvel what can be the beauty of heaven, if it can so far exceed that of this world that it is said, 'it cannot enter into the heart of man to conceive it.' But what is the matter?" said he (as entering the room and taking Mrs. Leslie's hand he noticed her troubled and tearful expression). "Mr. Leslie is well I know, for I saw him this morning in the village; and my little friends, Herbert and Ellen, ran to meet me in the garden. Are any of the little ones ill? or," said he (looking at the book still in her hand), "have you been making yourself unhappy over the sorrows of poor forlorn 'Jessica,' or 'Little Meg's Children'? That book looks like one of my old friends."

"No," said Mrs. Leslie: "my troubles and perplexities are of a very personal character, though I own that they are occasioned by reading this little book. I had it lent to me yesterday, and began to read it rather late in the evening, but I could not leave off till I had nearly finished it; and I went to bed thoroughly

unhappy. I scarcely slept at all, and when I did I dreamt of what I had been reading. It seems to me, if what this book says is true, that we are wrong altogether; and that there is little hope of any happiness, either in this world or the next. If to get to heaven we ought to give up to the poor all we possess, and to strip ourselves of everything that we may clothe and feed them, and then to spend all our time in praying to God to save ourselves and others from hell, and in trying to repent of sin, and in helping others to repent, I can't see how the world can go on at all, or what is to become of us, either in this world or in any other. But do you think we ought to be living such a life as this?"

"Most certainly not:" replied Mr. Herbert. "Let me look at the book," said he, stretching out his hand for it; then glancing at the name "Modern Christianity: a Civilized Heathenism." "Oh," he observed, "I have often heard of this little book, but have never read it. I think you can hardly have given me a fair statement of what the author intends us to understand. I don't mean you have not intended to be fair; but it is probably a book which suggests a different

train of thought in the minds of readers according to circumstances ; at any rate you seem to have been made unhappy by it, and I should like to talk the matter over with you, and see if I can clear away your difficulties in any measure : unless, indeed, they are already gone. This lovely sunshine is bright enough to send away any cloud, and probably the gloomy thoughts that troubled you in the night have vanished this morning."

"No : indeed they have not," replied Mrs. Leslie. "On the contrary, I feel even more perplexed and unhappy now than I did in the night. I have been sitting here ever since breakfast, looking at the lovely view, and wondering what God made it for, and why the sun shines so brightly, and everything looks so intended for our enjoyment, if we ought to be spending our time in unhappiness,—in shutting our eyes to everything pleasant in this world, and in looking forward with fear and trembling to a future of punishment and misery. One can't help feeling that there is very much that is wrong in the lives that we rich people live, and much that may be found fault with, and which may even be called 'Civilized Heathenism ;' but

what troubles me is, What are we to do to alter it? Surely we ought to be doing something. If we are living as 'Civilized Heathens' we ought to try to be very different, and to educate our children so that *they* may be very different; and as the nation is made up of individuals, I suppose we each have our individual duty and responsibility: and what is our duty? Just before you came to the window I had heard the children's merry voices on the terrace; and the thought that we were bringing them up to a life in which it would be impossible for them to serve and please God,—educating them in fact to be 'Civilized Heathens,'—seemed too terrible; and I had again been looking the book through to see if I could find my way better; but, as far as I can understand, it points out no plan but that of entirely renouncing the comforts and enjoyments of this life, and giving up all our riches and time and money to the poor. Still, I can't think that God would have made man so capable of enjoying the good things of this world, and would have surrounded him with so much that is enjoyable and beautiful, if He wished him to be unhappy, and intended him to spend all his time in a fearful trembling state of anxiety as

to what would become of him hereafter. Then, I don't see how the world would go on at all if the rich gave all they have to the poor, and ceased to require the comforts and luxuries which have to be manufactured for them. But, if comforts and luxuries are not to be enjoyed or used by the true disciples of Christ and the children of God, we ought individually to give them up, and try to make the world such as the writer of this book says it ought to be if we are following out the will and intentions of God. Do you see any way of unravelling my tangle of difficulties for me?"

"Remember, as I told you before, I have not read the book you are speaking of," said Mr. Herbert; "but certainly the state of things you have been describing, must (as far as I can understand my Bible) be as contrary as possible to the will and intention of God. We read that when 'in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,' He pronounced all 'very good,' and we can well understand how lovely and bright and fresh His newly-created work was; then, when He had created man in His own Image (as His last and best creation), He breathed into his nostrils His own breath as his

life, and made him capable of fully enjoying the beauty of the world in which He placed him ; and even set apart a place of special loveliness for his dwelling, for ' He planted a garden,' and there He put the man whom He had formed. We are told that this happy abode contained all that was needful to satisfy the requirements and wants of sinless man ; for ' the Lord God ' caused to grow every tree that was pleasant for the eyes,' as well as good for food, and of these the man might ' freely eat ;' He made him ' lord over the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and over every living thing,' and provided for his intellectual happiness by giving him a companion, and ' a helpmeet for him,' and by being Himself in communion with him, for we read, ' Adam heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.' And what was the occupation that God gave to this happy being, Man ? Was it not to ' dress and to keep' the lovely creation with which he was surrounded ; as if it were the will and intention of God that man's employment and pleasure should consist in the furthering of His own wonderful work of creation, in ' dressing and keeping' that newly created world, which He

had pronounced 'very good,' in order that he might know and serve his Maker by attending to the works of His hands?"

"But when sin entered the world," said Mrs. Leslie, "that happy state became all changed and altered, did it not?"

"When sin entered the world," said Mr. Herbert, "it is true that the ground was cursed for man's sake, and the curse of man himself was, that the work which before had been easy and delightful to him, should become hard and toilsome, and irksome to his human nature; that 'in the sweat of his brow he should eat bread.' But when the wondrous love of God showed itself in the redemption of the world, it not only redeemed man from eternal punishment, but also restored him in a great measure to the state in which his Maker placed him at his creation. The ground though cursed for man's sake, did not become a waste, and dreary wilderness; and man's labour (though weariness to the flesh) was allowed to become his highest earthly satisfaction and enjoyment. God appointed man to spend an allotted time on this earth in preparation for his entering into that Kingdom above, which He has pur-

chased and prepared for him ; but the time spent upon earth is not a weary, anxious exile from God's presence, an unsatisfied seeking after a God who has deserted this fallen world ; but rather a time of cheerful intelligent service to the Maker of the wonderful universe of which man is an occupant, and in which he may constantly learn more and more of the nature and will of that Creator, if he uses the powers of mind and body with which He has endowed him. Man's work ever since the fall has been to 'dress and to keep' this world ; and how richly his labours are rewarded may be proved, I am sure, by looking at the scene before us. But so wonderfully does God show His love for the world that He seems even to delight in its products, independently of the enjoyment or satisfaction which they may afford to man. Many a region clothed in the loveliest verdure has never been even looked on by the eye of man."

"I was thinking so this morning," said Mrs. Leslie, "and how, even in the woods, and on the blue hills which we see from this window, there must be thousands of lovely and most delicately formed flowers which spring up and bloom and

give their varied scents to the air, and die without any human eye seeing them ; and myriads of little birds which warble just as sweetly as if a crowd of human listeners were delighting in their songs ; and in some lands, we know that there are valleys and hills which are covered with vegetation of a kind and beauty perhaps even quite unknown to man, where human foot never did, and probably never will tread. Surely the works of God must have all shared in the redemption of the world !”

“I don’t see how we can think otherwise,” said Mr. Herbert. “And in the verse, ‘God so loved the world, that He sent His only begotten Son :’ the word ‘world’ in the original sense means more than merely *mankind*. That He careth for the smallest of His creatures we know from our Lord’s own words ; He tells us that ‘not a sparrow falleth to the ground’ without His knowledge, and that He clothes the grass of the field, and gives the lilies richer raiment than any earthly King can wear. If then God still keeps to His original design and plan, and puts man into the world ‘to dress it and to keep it,’ and not only to supply his bodily wants from its products but to use his mental

powers and capacities to learn and discern, through the works of God, the nature and will of the Creator, and to bring his own mind more and more into unison with his Maker's ; it follows that a world which would best fulfil God's will and be regarded with the highest favour by Him, would be one filled with intelligent workers, whose aim and desire would be to use all the good gifts and treasures of creation for the end which they were designed to fulfil ;—to work up (as it were) all the materials by which they were surrounded, so as to promote as much as possible the glory of God, and the benefit and enjoyment of man. And what would a world in this state be, but one in the highest condition of cultivation and refinement. A world in short, in the highest state of what we are accustomed to call 'civilization.'

"I suppose it would," said Mrs. Leslie : "but it would be a very different world indeed from the one in which we live at the present time."

"No doubt it would," said Mr. Herbert, "be as different as possible, quite as much so as the ideal world you pictured to me just now ; but it is one point gained, and that the chief one, if we

know at what we have to aim, and if we can see what our duty is, and *what* (be it ever so little) we can attempt towards any reformation or alteration in a state of affairs which we are all very ready to condemn. It is easy enough to say 'all this wrong doing is the fault of civilization ;' we 'wish we had lived some hundreds of years ago, before there was all this luxury, and refinement, and care for show and state, and this unreality and forgetfulness of all that ought most to interest and occupy man.' We all are ready enough with these reflections and exclamations, and here the matter very often ends : we don't see *what* we can do, and therefore we do nothing, and only imagine the fault is in circumstances, and that at any rate our small efforts can be of no avail. But as we *don't* live some hundreds of years ago, and do live in a highly civilized age, and must suppose every man has his duty to do in the age and at the time that it pleased God to send him into the world, it is, I say, one great point gained if we can see at what we should aim, as our chief object in life ; and if we can (in any degree) imagine a world fulfilling the will and intention of its Maker, and then work (however quietly and humbly) in

unison with that will and intention. Now, what should be the chief object and desire of man?"

"I suppose to save himself from hell, and to obtain heaven," said Mrs. Leslie: "should it not? or perhaps I ought to say, To help as many of our fellow-creatures as possible to salvation. This is I suppose the highest aim we can have on earth: is it not?"

"No: certainly not; most decidedly not. Our chief desire should be the glory of God, and our highest aim to promote and extend that glory,—to know His will and to do it, to understand His love and to return it as fully and freely as our poor natures will enable us. I imagine that that man's religion is the highest, and the most esteemed by His heavenly Father, who is so satisfied with the knowledge that he has the love of his God, that what may become of him in this world or in the next is a matter of little thought or concern to him. 'God loves me,' he can say, 'and therefore will have me with Him; all that befalls me in this world is regulated for me by His love, and for time and for eternity I can well leave all to Him.' As an old writer so forcibly puts it, 'If He sees fit to send me to hell, I will go there, holding fast

to Him, and hell will be no hell to me.' The love of God is so precious to him that it fully satisfies every requirement of his heart, and his great desire is to return in some measure the love so freely given to him. In the words of that most beautiful hymn he can say,—

“My God, I love Thee, not because
I hope for heaven thereby ;
Nor yet because who love Thee not
Must burn eternally ;
Nor for the sake of gaining aught,
Or seeking a reward,
But as Thyself hast loved me,
Oh, ever loving Lord !
So will I love Thee, dearest 'Lord,
And in Thy praise will sing,
Solely because Thou art my God,—
My ever-living King.”

There was a pause, and Mrs. Leslie's eyes were raised to the blue sky with a loving earnest look, as if she could for the moment realize the intense peace and happiness of a soul thus reposing in the loving hands of its heavenly Father,—contented that He should rule and arrange all for this world and the next. Then, as if a different train of thought were suggested by a glance at the book on the table by her side, she said: “But when you were

drawing your picture of mankind fulfilling as far as possible God's will and intention, and trying to show me that God delights in the happiness and well-being of all His creatures, it struck me that, after all, what this book says is true, as to the life and work of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth. *He* did not come as a king, or a rich man, or as what we should call 'an influential person;' but he was poor and despised, 'a man of sorrows;' and does not He mean us to live as He did? and intend to show us that all comfort and luxury and 'civilization' is wrong, and incompatible with the life that we ought to lead as His believers and followers?"

"There is one point which we must always carefully keep in mind," said Mr. Herbert: "in considering the work and life of our blessed Saviour upon earth, we must never forget that He was the same God who created the world, and who had lived from all eternity; that He was not only *equal* with the Father, but that He was the eternal God; for 'there are not three Eternals but One Eternal.' Therefore He was the same God who made the garden for the abode of Adam and Eve; who when He called Abraham, blessed him with temporal blessings,

so that 'Abraham was rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold;' who made His servant Job so prosperous that Satan exclaimed, 'Doth Job serve God for naught?' 'Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land;' and when Job had remained firm in his trust and obedience to Him through all his troubles, we read that the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before, and 'blessed his latter end more than his beginning.' His promise to His own chosen people was, that 'they should dwell in a land flowing with milk and honey;' a good land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates;' 'a land wherein they should eat bread without scarceness, and not lack anything in it; a land whose stones were iron, and out of whose hills they might dig brass.' Perhaps nowhere can we find an account of greater splendour and riches and luxury than in the history of King Solomon: and we are expressly told (as a mark of favour for asking for wisdom before any other gift) the Lord said, 'I will also give thee riches and honour, so that there shall not be any King like unto thee all thy days.' Solomon built the house of the Lord according to the commands

and directions of God ; but he also was thirteen years building his own house, and employed 'men of understanding' and 'cunning workmen to do it for him ;' we read in the description of this house (and of the one that he built for Pharaoh's daughter, 'whom he had taken to wife'), that they were of 'costly stones, hewed stones, and cedars.' It is also told us that 'he had a throne of ivory overlaid with best gold, and drinking cups of gold ;' that 'he had a navy of ships to fetch (what seem foolish and useless luxuries) gold and silver and apes and peacocks,' and horses to 'bring from Egypt linen yarns.' And 'when the Queen of Sheba came with her train of camels and servants, bearing spices and gold and precious stones, and saw his house which he had built, and his servants and ministers, and the cupbearers and their apparel, her heart died within her.' But we read that she acknowledged the true Giver of all this splendour, and exclaimed, 'Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighteth in thee.' We cannot then suppose from all this, that temporal prosperity, or even luxury, was *opposed* to the will of God, when we find that on the contrary earthly blessings were always promised and

given as a sign of His favour, and as a reward for the service and obedience of His servants, and I see no reason to conclude that God's will or intentions have been altered in this respect."

"Why then," said Mrs. Leslie, "was it that our Saviour led a life of poverty and humiliation? and how can we follow His example and consistently hold to the idea, that earthly prosperity is not condemned and despised by Him?"

"When our Lord by taking the manhood into God became man, He did it for 'our sake' that 'He might bear our sins and carry our sorrows.' He became a *curse* for us that God might forgive our sins; He became 'a man of sorrows' that we might be free. 'The Lord laid upon Him the iniquities of us all,' and in His body He bore our sins on the accursed tree, and was crucified for us that we might live by Him. And His life from the manger to the cross teaches us the one lesson, that *sin* has to be struggled with and conquered; that our corrupt nature must, as St. Paul says, 'be crucified with Him;' that all that is against the will of God in us must be destroyed, even if need be to the 'cutting off of the right hand or the plucking

out the right eye;' that the cross must be taken up daily, and all earthly possessions, yea, our own life also, must be held by us as ready to be sacrificed if need be. None can be followers of Him who do not feel thus bound to live according to His command and example, and to give up all their lives and all that they have to His honour and service, and to yield themselves, and every power and possession, as servants to do His will, to work His pleasure and to promote His glory; but in what way we are to do this is to us the important consideration, and I do not see that Christ has limited His service to any one particular position or mode of life more than to another. His precepts apply to all, and the life which He led upon earth was so wonderfully full and perfect, that there is no one (be their position or duty what it may) who cannot find an example for themselves in their Saviour's life."

"I remember," said Mrs. Leslie, "hearing a beautiful course of lectures, during Lent (one year when I was in London), on the different aspects (so to speak) of our Saviour's life on earth; the lecturer said, that 'everyone might find a pattern for their own lives in our Saviour's'.

The subjects were, 'His hidden life,' 'His domestic life,' 'His public life,' 'His suffering life.' I hardly think that I have mentioned all, as I missed one or two lectures, but I particularly remember one lecture upon 'The hidden life,' as it was on a subject I had never thought much of before. It certainly does seem very strange that though our Lord was thirty-three years upon this earth, we hear nothing whatever of His life until the last three years, excepting the one incident of His being in the Temple, and the account of that ends by telling us that 'He went with His parents and was subject to them.' I remember how forcibly the lecturer brought to our minds that the every-day life which our Lord must have led during those years, is just the life which thousands of His followers are leading now, but, that as God He had the *power* to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and to relieve by a word all the distress which He must daily have witnessed. Yet He did it not, but simply fulfilled the duties which belonged to His home-life, and this He must have done in order to give an example to those whose path to heaven is hidden and unseen, and who are to serve God by performing their home duties. The

other lectures showed us how *all* can find their pattern and example in Christ, whatever may be their station or duties in life, and that this is one great proof of the divinity of our Lord, as none but God could have given such a perfect example of life."

"And, therefore," said Mr. Herbert, "as we have just seen that God allows His servants to be in positions of prosperity and wealth, we must conclude that all the precepts of Christ are compatible with men's duty in those positions ; and that His example is equally applicable to the lives of the rich and great and learned, as to the poor and low and ignorant. But as we cannot be Christ's faithful disciples and followers without giving up all our lives, our talents, and possessions to Him, and devoting all to His service, here I think we come to the very kernel of our argument. We said, to begin with, that the ideal of a world in a state of Christianity and civilization, would be a world full of true servants of God, devoting their endowments, blessings, and gifts to His glory and to the good of man, and employing the materials with which He has surrounded them as the Great Creator originally intended them

to be used. But, alas, we well know that such is the weakness and sinfulness of our nature, that (as our Article tells us) 'the affections or desires of the flesh are not subject to the law of God.' Instead of fulfilling His designs and intention, and being the intelligent instruments of causing all His works to glorify and honour Him, we are apt to 'worship and serve the creature instead of the Creator,' and to use all our talents and powers of body and mind to turn His good gifts into means for our own corruption here, and for our destruction hereafter. In this way we may well deserve the name of 'civilized heathens,' for we are leading the lives of 'civilized heathens.' There were nations at the time of Solomon who were in as high a state of prosperity and luxury as the one over which he ruled, and also Kings who sat upon 'ivory thrones' and drank from 'golden cups;' but they knew not the true God, and their riches and talents were employed solely for their own enjoyment, and generally to gratify their own sensual lusts and appetites; and many among God's own people followed after them and shared in their corruption and doom. Solomon's heart, we read, was 'turned from the Lord, and he went

after strange gods,' and the Lord's favour and blessing were withdrawn from him. And the hearts of many, very many, are now 'turned from the Lord to go after strange gods,'—the 'gods of this world,' the lusts and affections of the flesh, and the corruptions of their wicked nature; to these they dedicate their talents and time and means, to these they devote their service, and render up all the good gifts and precious materials which God has bestowed for a wholly different purpose: a life of 'civilized heathenism' is led *here*, and the doom of such must be looked for hereafter. Nay: our Lord Himself declares that 'it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment, than for those who know the true God, but who serve and obey Him not.' But acknowledging and feeling all this is very different from laying the blame of our misdoings and shortcomings upon our civilization, or from even saying that 'because we are using influence and talents and riches for a wrong purpose, therefore *they* must be given up:' this would perhaps, in many cases, be the easiest way to act. There are some who have given up all, and who have as you say stripped themselves of every outward comfort

and luxury, and who have found that they were as far from God as ever, and as little inclined to serve Him as they were before. As a rule, we may be sure that God means us to serve Him in the position in which He has placed us, and that He gives us all talents which He requires us to use for the special work He has assigned to each of us ; and the higher our position, and the greater our talents, the more valuable is the service He expects and looks for from us."

"Then you think the rich and clever are really able to serve and please God even better than the poor?" said Mrs. Leslie.

"I think that what our Saviour said must certainly be the truth ; that 'to whom much is given, of him will much be required.' And I believe this rule applies to everything God has given man,—as well to his powers of mind and body as to outward blessings. *We* are somewhat apt to judge quite differently, and to think those must be safer, and more able and more likely to serve God, whom He has placed in the humbler positions of life ; and, especially, we are apt to think that talents, and what we are accustomed to call 'tastes' (which means, I

think, appreciation for what is beautiful or harmonious), are rather drawbacks and hindrances to the service of God, than gifts from Him to be used for His glory and for doing His work. This feeling, I believe, chiefly arises from our accustoming ourselves to think that what is beautiful in this world, particularly if the work of man's hands, is beneath the notice of our God. So strong is this feeling in the minds of some, that I am certain many sincere Christians are pained and troubled at any display of art,—any ornamentation in our churches,—because they think it is not in accordance with the true worship of the great God; and that any attempt at decoration, in colour or architecture, must be an offence to Him and displeasing in His eyes."

"Yes," said Mrs. Leslie: "I know how strong this feeling is in some people. I can well remember the distressed face of a dear good old lady whom I once took to afternoon prayers in All Saints' Church, Margaret Street. She said it must be impossible that anyone could pray to God 'in such a church as *that*.'"

"Well," said Mr. Herbert, "one can easily understand that for persons quite unaccustomed

to a highly decorated church and to a choral service, time must be required before they could feel calm and collected enough for prayer ; and to some it may always be more in unison with their devotional feelings to join in a simple and undecorated service. But I think the feeling of many would be very different, and that uncharitable judgments would be less frequently expressed, if we fully recognized the fact, that God rejoices in all that is beautiful, and especially in the handiwork of His noblest creature,—man ; we are told that He commanded ‘that skilful and cunning workmen should be found for the work of His tabernacle and temple, and that He gave most minute directions Himself as to every particular in their designs and ornamentation ; and we may feel sure that those to whom He gives special talents of body or mind, and endows with what we call the most ‘refined tastes,’ are precisely the servants to whom He has assigned the highest work, and from whom He expects the most finished and valuable returns for the gifts which He has bestowed.

“I think I can make my meaning plainer if I give you an illustration, or rather if I draw you a picture of two different men, who may be both

desirous of doing God's will and serving Him according to their power and ability, but who have what we may call two differently organized minds,—who have indeed nothing in common but outward circumstances : two country gentlemen, let us say, who are in a good position in life, with ample means and having no profession or necessary occupation. To one it has pleased God to give what we may call a naturally simple mind : he has no great sensitiveness of either bodily or mental organization, no very strong tastes or great appreciation of what is beautiful or grand ; no very painful or decided aversion to what is ugly. If it had pleased God that he should have been born in a garret, he would have been just as happy on a boarded floor, and in whitewashed walls, as he is in his own comfortable and elegant mansion ; and as he is now circumstanced, he can sit in a room with badly assorted decorations, and not at any rate feel unhappy ; he might prefer a well-arranged apartment, but he has not cared enough about the matter to give it his personal supervision. His own study is the most simply furnished room in the house, and is probably little more than a receptacle for his

books and papers. His dinners for family or friends, are what his wife or his servants like to give him, and served in the old-fashioned way, because he takes little heed to modern improvements. It is not his way to notice decorations, nor has he taste to choose them, so he wisely leaves the matter alone. It is the same in all household arrangements; so long as there is nothing very strikingly defective, or wrong, all goes on as it did in his father's time. I am not imagining an indifferent or uncultivated man: he may be as intellectual as you like, and as well educated; he may, as a duty, see that all is in keeping with his station, and in due order; but his pleasure and tastes do not lie in that direction: it gives him no very great delight to see all in perfect harmony; he can be quite as happy in his straight-walked flower garden, amongst his beds of snowdrops and tulips, as he would be in the most ably contrived hothouse, amidst foreign ferns, and flowers flourishing by the skill and care of the most scientific gardener. And when he goes to church he can pray earnestly to his God in a deal pew,—or even in a square high one, with a red lining,—and join heartily in singing the

psalms of Tate and Brady with the tuneless school-children, and never be troubled with the thought that the arrangements in the house of the Lord are unworthy of the service of the great God. Why should he think so? He does not himself feel the want of what is beautiful and harmonious. He has a good income, and his simple life leaves him a large surplus ; his children have the same dispositions as himself, and require no very expensive education, and he cares too little for the luxuries of life to wish to amass riches for the future aggrandisement of his family : so he has money at command, and is ever ready to respond to any call for charity ; he delights in feeling that he is benefiting the poor, and relieving the sick or needy,—those are always at hand, and the pleasure of doing them good is great, and delightful, even in this world ; but he has higher motives, and feels the happiness of ministering to God's poor, and obtaining His blessing in return.

“ Now let us turn our attention to the neighbouring Squire. It has pleased God to give him what is called a highly sensitive and delicate organization of body and mind, with

refined tastes and perceptions. From a child, beauty and harmony have attracted and delighted him, and deformity or ugliness repelled and distressed him ; he has been happy, without knowing why, in scenes of refinement and loveliness (natural or artificial), and unhappy and fretted when obliged to come into contact with coarseness or ugliness. When he comes into his estate, he feels that his happiness and pleasure will consist in bringing all over which he has control into the highest state of harmony and perfection. His house wants repairing and beautifying, and he knows that none but workmen of artistic tastes can carry out his designs. He delights in lovely combinations of foreign foliage and growth, and costly scientific contrivances only will enable him to gratify his wishes. He loves music, but can find no pleasure in the uncultivated performances which satisfy his neighbour ; he must have skilled musicians or none at all. He delights in painting, and has himself talent for the art, but to gratify his taste, and to cultivate his talent, much money must be expended ; it would only be torture to him to sit opposite the unartistic performances which adorn the walls of

his neighbour. His children have tastes refined as his own, and he longs to give them the highest and most expensive culture, which probably he has lacked himself. He delights in scenery with the exquisite sense of an artist, but to enjoy it fully, expensive journeys must be taken. He is, like his neighbour, a sincere and good Christian, but his soul revolts at worshipping God in a church less beautiful than his own stable, and with instruments and voices of cracked and discordant notes. Now what is this man to do? How is he to live? What is his duty? God has given him his tastes and talents, and has also given him the means of cultivating and indulging them, but if he does so, the opinion of those whose opinions he most values will be, that he is worldly, luxurious,—in short, that he is leading a life of ‘Civilized Heathenism.’ He cannot, even with his ample means, cultivate his talents, buy costly works of art, keep up his establishment, and gardens and greenhouses in the perfection which his perceptions require, and have as much to spare for the poor and needy as his neighbour has. And the good people look at his neighbour’s doings, and exclaim, ‘See the beautiful simplicity

of that man's life ! Those are the men that England wants ! There is no over-luxury there : no pleasing of self : plenty to spare for the poor and needy.' Thus the poor refined sensitive man is condemned by others, and, worse still, he condemns himself, and believes he can only reach heaven by refusing to gratify every taste or inclination that he has ; or if he gratifies them, he does so with a half consciousness that he is doing wrong, and spending time and money on objects unworthy of a Christian's attention and love.

"Now is this so ? I believe not. I believe of those two men, the latter is intended for the highest position and service as God's worker in this world, and therefore is endowed by Him with the highest gifts and talents. No doubt his work is more difficult and intricate : he is the servant who has the ten talents, and who has to work for the greatest reward. But to do his appointed work, I believe that he is not intended to stifle his own tastes and talents for what is beautiful and harmonious ; that he is not to content himself with such house and gardens as his neighbour's ; or to deny himself the sight of beautiful scenery, or the best of art

and music; but that on the contrary, all his tastes and talents and riches were given him to be used in working up, or causing to be worked up by others, the materials with which God has enriched His creation. I believe that his pleasure, and enjoyment in the successes and achievements of art and workmanship, are a tribute, and even a delight to his heavenly Father; that his mind, as he appreciates man's work, is in unison with that of God, when He commanded that skilful and cunning workmen should be found to execute His designs for His tabernacle and temple; and that the spontaneous burst of delight and of praise to God, as he stands on the mountain top, and gazes with an artist's eye on the wondrous beauty of the scene around him, is as pure an expression of worship as God can receive from earth, and perhaps more worthy than any other that man can raise, to mingle with the angels' songs above. If that man lives up to what God gives him talents to do, he is raising humanity nearer to God, and comprehending more of the mind of God than perhaps any other character can do,—but such a man is a type of the highest civilization."

"Then," said Mrs. Leslie, "you think that such a man may better and more easily serve God than a less gifted individual can do?"

"I fear," replied Mr. Herbert, "I have failed to make my meaning clear; at any rate you have not come to the conclusion that I intended. No, indeed I do not think it is *easy* for such a man to serve God; on the contrary, I believe that to such men our Saviour's words are most particularly applicable: 'How *hardly* shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven.' God in all ages seems to acknowledge that those in prosperity have special temptation to forget Him, and to turn from His true worship. After promising many temporal blessings to His chosen people, He adds: 'When these things come upon thee, then beware lest Thou forget the Lord thy God, and go after other Gods to serve them;' and as a prosperous nation is in danger of forgetting God, so a prosperous man, richly endowed in mind and body, is tempted to turn his talents and riches into means of gratifying his own carnal and selfish inclinations and pleasures, rather than to employ them in God's service. None but such a man himself knows how '*hardly*' he makes progress in his road to

heaven; none else can tell the constant trials and temptations that beset him, or how true it is that the cross must be taken up *daily* by him; a cross which is all the sharper and heavier because so few can understand what it is. Every taste and talent has its own peculiar temptation which he has to struggle and fight against; his temper is irritated by small annoyances, which a less sensitive mind would never notice; his self-love is tempted to the inordinate gratification of tastes which afford him such keen enjoyment; his envy is excited by the superior talents displayed by others; his covetousness, by his wish to obtain possessions which are so valued by their owners that he can never hope to make them his; love to his neighbour is hard to acquire or practise, because he knows so few can understand him, or enter into his feelings or views; and therefore often, very often, the attempt to serve God is given up in despair, as impossible; and a life of 'Civilized Heathenism' is led, because a life of 'Christianised Civilization' is too high to aim at. 'But,' says our merciful Saviour, 'the things that are impossible with men are possible with God,' and it is possible for such a man to give

himself up, with all his riches of mind and his possessions, to the service and glory of God. I believe there are many such servants of God in our land, and God grant there may be many more ; and those men are, as far as I can see, the servants unto whom the Lord has given the ten talents. The labour required of them is greater, and more difficult, but the reward will consequently be richer ; for must not that man be capable of higher enjoyment hereafter, who has been conscious all his life here of tastes which he could not satisfy with this world's creatures ; of talents which did not supply him with the power of working out fully what he aimed at or desired ; and of a mind which no human friend could understand or appreciate. What a glorious reward for the faithful steward of the ten talents on earth, to 'enter into the joy of his Lord;' to feel at last 'the eye satisfied with seeing, and the ear filled with hearing;' to behold Him of whom the loveliest vision on earth was but a faint shadow or glimpse ; and to be able to praise and glorify Him worthily, without any of those drawbacks and hindrances which so troubled his worship in all earthly temples. I believe that in heaven the happiness of all will

be perfect according to the capability of enjoyment; and that man must be capable of the highest happiness to whom the Lord has granted the largest share of talents here, if he has employed them in accordance with God's will and intentions."

"I think now I quite understand your meaning," said Mrs. Leslie. "You mean that the riches and endowments that God gives to be used in His service are likely to be turned to self-glorification."

"Exactly," replied Mr. Herbert; "and I think that the 'greater they are, the more temptation there will be so to employ them, and the stronger will be the efforts of our enemy the devil in urging a man thus to use them, and in suggesting plausible reasons for so doing. Christ, when asked how we should obtain eternal life, gave a simple and concise answer: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself.' And however we look upon our Saviour's example and precepts (and we may, as we have said, find them applicable to every condition or state of life) we always find them in strict accordance with this code,—love to

God in doing our 'Father's business,'—love to man in serving him, and in helping him in *his* service to God. But self-service has always been the way in which the corruption of our nature has shown itself from the fall of man, and in which it will show itself to the end of time ; and as a cultivated and refined man is as we have said, probably more tempted than any other to self-service and self-glorification (and that in a way which a simpler mind cannot experience), so I think a highly civilized nation may be led into the like self-worship. It certainly seems to be the ruling principle of our age. Is it not the temptation of our merchants and business men to enrich self at the expense of others, and to 'take advantage of opportunities,' as it is called, to the detriment of others, and that so to the verge of dishonesty that some upright men have found it impossible to preserve their integrity and continue in their calling? And thus in every position of life the principle acted upon, so far from being in accordance with our Saviour's command, is exactly the reverse,—namely of appropriating to self this world's good, and of turning God's good gifts to profit, or pleasure for ourselves, or

for those so closely connected with us that their profit and pleasure is the same to us as our own. Does not life,—either considered as business-life or social-life,—seem guided on this selfish principle, when we see the struggling and striving and pressing of each to have more, or even to *seem* to have more than his neighbour; and *that* not even for the value or beauty of the possession itself, or for the pleasure of more fully enjoying it, but simply that our neighbour may not be better off than we are, and that we may satisfy our envious feelings and have the gratification of knowing, that instead of having need to envy him, we have given him occasion to envy us? Is it not too often positive pain instead of pleasure to us to look on a beautiful work of art, however much we may admire it, if it is our neighbour's and not our own? And is there not a secret feeling of something like satisfaction, when we find that a possession which he considered perfect, has flaws which render it less valuable in his eyes as well as in ours? Depend upon it, it is by the simple test of which I have spoken, that we may best find out whether we really are Christ's faithful servants and disciples, and following in His footsteps. I believe

that God wills that we should carry out this rule of life (love to God and man), in the way He appoints for us ; and that we often form too narrow an idea of the way in which love for our neighbour may be expressed or practised. We limit it too much to simple almsgiving, and forget that almsgiving, or what we are accustomed to call 'charity,' may be used even as an occasion to gratify our self-love and to increase our self-glorification. A man who can spare money without exercising any real self-denial, or foregoing any comfort or even luxury, may feel great satisfaction in giving it away to promote plans of charity, or in adding his name to lists of subscribers for building churches or schools, or the like. Nay, even if his position is not sufficiently exalted, or his means large enough to enable him to attain an eminence for charity before his fellow-men, he may still feel that, for his own comfort and ease of mind, he *must* bestow some of his money on the poor, —he cannot otherwise enjoy the remainder. It is far the easiest way thus to dispose of a certain sum, and then to feel that the rest is all his own to spend as he likes. He would be afraid to incur God's displeasure, and possibly to lose

his safety for eternity, if he did not respond to the calls on his purse, made by those who want his money for such good purposes ; and having done so, he feels that all is right : he has (like the servant with the one talent), given to his Lord what was 'his own,' and does not reflect whether his service was one of love or fear. It struck me at the beginning of our conversation, when you asked me 'if an earnest Christian should give all he had to God's poor, so that thereby he might escape hell fire?' that such an one would act very much in the spirit of the slothful and unprofitable servant. 'I was afraid,' *he* said, 'lest I should not employ my talent as my "hard" master expected, so I dared not employ or enjoy it at all.' 'I was afraid' of running the risk of punishment, so I kept the talent, that I might return it as I received it ; 'there, thou hast what was thine.' '*I* have never used it ; it hast not ministered to my profit or enjoyment : I deliver it all up to thee, for *I was afraid* to do otherwise.' 'Perfect love,' however, 'casteth out fear,' and God will care little or nothing for the service springing from fear. But the charity of the day is too often of this kind. Like the slothful servant,

a man will not seek to discover in what way God intends him to do His work in the world, or employ or improve his talents, and so he contents himself with just giving what he looks upon as God's portion of his possession,—‘Here, thou hast what is thine,’ he says now, and he will at the last day hear the awful words, ‘Thou unprofitable servant;’ and will find too late that his talents were given him to work with and to improve, and that his life and all his energies belonged to his heavenly Master. Yet *our* judgment is often in favour of this slothful service of God. A man who will give his money when asked for it, is looked upon as a good and charitable Christian; and one who refuses to give it, is condemned without consideration, though it may be quite possible that he may be employing his talents in a manner more in unison with the will and intention of his heavenly Father.”

“I feel somewhat self-convicted by what you say,” said Mrs. Leslie, “for I must confess I judged in the manner you describe the other day, when Mrs. White came with the list of subscribers to a little fund she is raising now that her husband is ill and unable to work. She said that Mr. Graham, whose name was down

for a small sum, 'was very kind, but regretted that he could not give her more.' And when I remembered all the expensive work that he is having done to his own house, I felt quite vexed that he should not have been more liberal to such a case of distress."

"It is rather curious that you should have mentioned that instance," said Mr. Herbert: "for I was only rejoicing yesterday that Mr. Graham's improvements were so long in being finished; as poor widow Coleman was telling me how pleased she was that her son had such profitable employment, for that Mr. Graham had heard how clever he was, and had sent for him from London (where he was trying to improve himself), and thought so well of his work, that as she expressed it, 'her son was a made man for life.' A little passage in the Book of Kings came into my mind: do you remember it? 'When Solomon was building his *own* house he sent for Hiram out of Tyre. He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali; he was a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and was cunning to work all work in brass. And he came to Solomon and wrought all his work."

"I see, that, as you say, a man may do his duty to his neighbour even better by keeping him *in* work, than by keeping him when he is *out* of it ; and yet there seems more self-indulgence in the former kind of charity than in the latter. I mean when we are employing workmen to do *our own* work."

"There may, I think, be more self-gratification in one or in the other according to circumstances," replied Mr. Herbert. "We have just been saying there may be possibly great selfishness even in almsgiving. At any rate we may feel we are not called upon to judge for another on this point ; and it is good and profitable to us all, to be able to exercise that charity 'which hopeth all things.' As to the question we are discussing now, I certainly think there is very great danger in these days of civilization and luxury and refinement, of trying to get the labour of others for unfair returns, and that we may incur that stern reproof of St. James to the rich,—not for withholding their goods from the poor, but for keeping back what was lawfully due to those whom they employed. He says, 'The hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept

back by fraud, crieth : and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.' 'Do not rich men oppress you and draw you before the judgment seats.' Perhaps we may feel these words are hardly applicable to the present state of things, and that the rich are in more danger of being oppressed by the class we call the 'working orders ;' but there must have been some strong reasons why such a struggling 'fighting for rights' system became so general, and why 'unions' and 'combinations' and plans of the kind appeared to be necessary to those who organized them. I know that a quiet old country parson ought not to give his opinion on such an intricate subject ; and if we had a clever man of business, or a statesman here, he would give us many reasons and explanations (and I have no doubt true ones) for the state of affairs which I deplore as one of the worst results—I will not say of our civilization,—but of our want of true Christianity. But when all is said, I am sure that the conclusion of St. James is the safest we can come to : 'If ye observe the Royal Law, Ye shall love thy neighbour as thyself, ye shall do well ;' and in small matters in

which private individuals are called upon to act, as well as in the mercantile and manufacturing business of our land, the Royal Law will keep us all right."

"Yes: it certainly is very difficult to be perfectly pure and just in all our dealings in such matters," said Mrs. Leslie; "and I own it is very much more agreeable to bestow a free gift, than to have to pay more than one expected for work done, even though we may feel the work was worthy of the price, and the labourer in much want of the sum thus fairly earned, so that I am sure we ought not to judge Mr. Graham, or anyone else."

"It is quite impossible that we can fairly do so," replied Mr. Herbert. "Our Lord often compares this world to a vineyard, in which each servant has his own work; but the work of one must often, or generally, be quite different to that of another, and so our judgments (if we attempt to judge) must be unfair, or untrue. We cannot thoroughly understand to what work God calls another, though it is always in our power to find out what He has appointed for us to do, both for Him and for our neighbour."

"Which work I suppose is defined in the words of our Catechism,—‘to do our duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call us,’" said Mrs. Leslie. "But I think we must allow that God calls some to special work, and means them to give up the station or condition in which they are placed, in order that they may devote their whole lives to His service: for example, as missionaries, or as sisters of mercy, either abroad or at home."

"No doubt He does call many to such devoted service to Him," said Mr. Herbert, "and has high and special work for them to do; but I think many others are mistaken in thinking He has called *them*, and that a restless feeling is thus produced in them, which prevents any good work being done in the station in which God has placed them: great caution is required before anyone concludes that God really intends him to leave one post of duty for another."

"But how do you think anyone can know if God does so call him?" said Mrs. Leslie. "The present is so different to the time when our Lord was upon the earth, and His voice could be heard."

“Even then,” said Mr. Herbert, “I think our Lord showed us that outward circumstances were to be regarded and acted upon; at any rate, He did not give the same directions to all. When the Gadarene asked to be allowed to follow Him, He bade him ‘return to his friends and tell *them* what great things the Lord had done for him.’ And we do not hear that He bade Zaccheus give up his riches, or Joseph of Arimathea his position, or Lazarus his domestic life with his sisters. Perhaps our best test as to our fitness for higher or closer service to God is the way we are doing our work where we are. We know His *first* reply to the young man, whom He afterwards bade sell all that he had and to give to the poor was, to ‘keep the commandments;’—those commandments which, in answer to an exactly similar question, He explained as love to God and man.—The young man replied that these he ‘had kept;’ and *then* our Saviour put to a test the obedience and devotion he thus professed,—knowing, that at *that* point he would fail. His own Apostles He called, when they were following quietly their daily business,—the sons of Zebedee, from the ship where they were ‘mending their nets,’

and Matthew from the receipt of custom. We can hardly imagine that God intends us for higher service in His vineyard, when we are conscious that we are only doing a small part of the work He has already given us, and *that* little with an unwilling heart. A man can't think he is to go to teach the heathen abroad, when he knows that he takes no trouble about the instruction of his own immediate belongings; and a woman can't flatter herself that she is fit to be a sister of mercy to the poor, or a nurse to the sick, if she can't bear with patience the trial of a troublesome servant or a fretful child, or nurse or tend carefully an uninteresting old relative. 'He that is faithful in little, is faithful also in much' is a rule to guide us; and if we are faithful stewards where God has placed us, we shall be blessed in our work, whether He calls us to higher service or not."

"Then you think if we are so working for Christ, He might not find it impossible to live among us, even though we *are* in a state of civilization?" asked Mrs. Leslie.

"I don't quite understand your question, and imagine you are again alluding to that book at your side, the contents of which, as I

told you before, are unknown to me," said Mr. Herbert.

"I beg your pardon. Yes : I certainly was thinking of a paragraph in this book. I would read it to you, but I don't think you would like to hear it ; it struck me as being irreverently expressed, even if the idea can be taken into consideration. It is this : Whether, if Christ appeared on earth *now*, He would find any to receive and welcome Him ; or whether our present state of civilization would prevent the possibility of His dwelling among us as a Friend : whether He would not indeed find all our ideas and modes of life so at variance with His wishes and work, that He could not enter our houses or sit at our tables or countenance our doings."

"I don't quite see," said Mr. Herbert, "how it is possible for us rightly to discuss such a question, or what profit it would be to us to do so. We are sure that at the time our blessed Saviour did make His appearance in the world, men's hearts and minds ought to have been in a state of expectancy and preparation for Him. Holy Simeon and Anna had long waited for His personal appearance ; and all to whom He gave grace to obey His call, and follow Him, were pre-

pared to recognize the promised Messiah 'who was to redeem Israel.' But we know that the coming of our Lord, to which we have to look forward, must be a very different one; and for *that* we have to prepare, 'lest that day come upon us suddenly.' Our Lord tells us how He would have us be waiting for Him,—'as faithful servants,' doing His work in 'His household' while watching for our Lord; and we have been trying to prove that civilization is not at variance (but, on the contrary, is in accordance) with His will and intention for us, and with the work He has given us to do: why then should it make us afraid of our Lord's presence, or unprepared to receive Him? I believe (and I say it with all reverence) that there are many households in this land in which our Lord would be a welcome and a willing Guest; and many a dinner table, even elegantly decorated and plentifully provided, where the conversation is such as He could (may we not say that He does?) sanction and approve. What is our knowledge of science, and literature, and nature, and art, but knowledge of the work of the Most High? and what are the kindly interchanges of friendship and good-will, but communion with those who are

our 'neighbours' on earth, and who (through God's mercy) will be fellow-heirs of His kingdom above, or (to speak more in unison with our subject) 'fellow citizens in the household of God'? Surely knowledge, and refinement, and beauty, and ornament, alone will never separate man from God: and there are many loving hearts now in the world who have received their Saviour as He most wishes to be received; and to whom He will apply His own words,— 'Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed.'"

"And yet," said Mrs. Leslie, "it does seem strange to think what different lives Christ's followers must lead now, to those which His disciples led when He was on the earth. His Apostles, for instance: how different they were to the Bishops and clergy of the present day! one can hardly think it can be right that *they* should partake of the luxury and refinement of the age as they do; though, perhaps, this is a remark I ought not to make."

"If," said Mr. Herbert, "a state of civilization has brought duties on all the workers in Christ's vineyard, which are different from those which they must have had if life had continued as it

was when their Master was visibly present on the earth, it follows that the servants who are appointed as His 'overseers' must necessarily have different work too, and no doubt are assailed by all the peculiar temptations which our civilized state brings upon us all. That the clergy are specially called upon to lead holy lives, we can have no hesitation in saying, as we know that they have solemnly declared that they 'felt moved by the Holy Ghost' to 'take upon them their holy office,' and have vowed to 'make themselves and their families examples to their flocks.' But that their lives and examples must be in accordance with the time when it has pleased God that they should work in His vineyard seems to be very plain. A man would be of comparatively little use, who had not the culture in every way suitable to make him a teacher, and a preacher to the educated and intellectual minds with which he had to do. And his position in life must be in accordance with his education, for the same reason : namely, that he could not otherwise so well do his duty among those with whom his work lies. One can't but fear that there are some who take the solemn vows of the ministry upon them, without either due prepara-

tion or a thorough desire to serve God with all their powers and hearts ; and very fearful is the thought of the lives of such unfaithful pastors of God's flock. But I know well that God has many faithful workers among His clergy, who are giving their time and talents, yes, their very lives, to His service, and who are guiding others to work for their Master, in a way that none could do who were not so educated as to be capable of appreciating the advantages to be met with in civilized society. How far it is right or wise for clergymen to mix in what are called the gaieties of the world, is, I think, a very serious question, which can only be decided by each individual for himself, and perhaps it is hardly a subject which it is to our present purpose to discuss."

"I don't think it is," said Mrs. Leslie : "I wish chiefly to see my own duties, and I have been several times on the point of remarking, that though all that you have said has cleared away many of my difficulties, yet it has had little to do with my own position in the world. What are the duties of a civilized woman? is the question which it most concerns me to have answered. But perhaps you think her work is

too undefined to point out, or (like my author here) that she is altogether too frivolous and unsatisfactory a being to be worth the trouble of notice or instruction?"

"I confess," said Mr. Herbert, smiling, "that you have given me a difficult subject: there is so much written, and said in these days upon the duties and rights and work of women, that an old country parson may well fear to meddle with such a dangerous matter. But it is said sometimes, 'A looker-on sees most of the game;' and I confess, as a looker-on, I think women are making some very grievous mistakes, which, if persevered in, may lead to serious consequences."

"You mean in aspiring to work for which they are not suited?" said Mrs. Leslie.

"Not only in doing that," replied Mr. Herbert, "but also in neglecting that which God has given them to do. He that in the beginning made male and female, assigned to each their different and respective work, and gave to each the talents and powers peculiarly adapted to that work; and I don't think that either sex can with any advantage undertake the work of the other: indeed I am modest

enough to believe that if from circumstances a man has to undertake a woman's duties, he makes a still greater bungle of it than she does in trying to do his. Woman was created as a companion for man, because it was not 'good for man to be alone,' and as 'a helpmeet for him,'—to assist him no doubt in that labour of joy which we have before said consisted in dressing and keeping the Paradise which was their home. And it is *now* as it was in Paradise of old, woman's duties are the same,—to cheer man's solitude, and to help him in his labours; and her province and capabilities seem to me very clearly defined, if she only cares to see them."

"I suppose it is one of the evils of civilization that she should aim at those duties and positions for which she is unfit?" said Mrs. Leslie.

"I don't quite see why it should be," said Mr. Herbert: "it strikes me it is more in accordance with *uncivilization*. We know in heathen countries the women have all the rough, heavy work given them to do, and I think it is somewhat a parallel arrangement that the civilized woman should wish, and try to undertake mental tasks, which are just as much beyond the power and strength of her mind as

wheeling stones in a barrow, or carrying mortar in a hod, is above her bodily ones. God seems to have given to woman as different a mental organization to man as he has a bodily one. Man has power and force; woman the fine perception, the delicate taste, the gentle hand, and the endurance of body and mind, which are required to finish (or perhaps more often to begin) man's sterner labours. There is hardly, I think, a single employment of man, which does not require woman as his 'helpmeet' to carry it out. Our manufactories have all some delicate parts which a woman's eye and hand can best perform; our farmers would be ill off indeed if men only could be found to assist them; our physicians and surgeons know that their most carefully-prepared medicines, and most skilfully-performed operations, will avail little, if the nursing of their patients is not properly and effectually carried out; and the schoolmaster will exclaim, 'Give me a boy who has been trained and grounded by a sensible woman teacher!' And for all this work, which seems intended for woman, she has capabilities and powers and talents peculiarly adapted for it given to her by her Maker: she has them

given, I say ; for I believe few women are without them, in a greater or less degree, though I confess I think many are trying to ignore or neglect them. Their education is often now so ordered, that the duties assigned to women by Nature (which is only another word for the expression of God's will) are very likely to be left altogether undone, for if *they* do not do them no one else can. They are too often taught to despise their share of the work of God's vineyard, and in consequence man's labour becomes useless and ineffectual. Our soldiers and sailors may be willing to defend their country ; but unless watchful mothers and nurses have cared for their constitutions in the beginning of their lives, where will be their powers of sustaining the hardships of the war or the voyage ? And the same may be said of our statesmen and clergy, our merchants and doctors,—none but a woman's care can supply the early nurture and training of body and mind so necessary for their after-life, and for the success of their work, and the discipline of mind, the power of attention, the habits of obedience and truth, and all the qualities which, when ripened into manhood, form characters which are the glory and stay of our

land. Will any man venture to say that he can give the first lessons and first impressions as well as a woman can? that he can see as quickly what is wanted to point out a fault or enforce a virtue, or can watch and wait as patiently and enduringly for those good traits in a wayward child which her intuitive sense tells her will be developed by and bye? Yet women profess they cannot find work to do, and wish to become statesmen (or stateswomen: I don't know the term they would like) and doctors and all else, themselves; and the half of the work which properly belongs to them is left undone, while they are trying to undertake that for which they are wholly unsuited. Surely the more refined, and cultivated, and *civilized* a nation becomes, the more work there must be for which woman's talents are suited and required: it cannot be the natural consequence of civilization that she should find herself so short of employment that she must seek it in man's province."

"I suppose," said Mrs. Leslie, "that there is work for us to do, and that we ought to do it, and yet the life of a woman in my position certainly does seem to consist of duties which

may well be thought vain and frivolous, and unworthy of a Christian's attention. I felt very unhappy in reading the passage in this book, describing the 'Belgravian lady' who spends her morning in her elegant drawing-room, her afternoon in calling upon her friends, and then goes to All Saints' Church, Margaret Street, to five o'clock prayers, dressed in her fine clothes, with jewels on her hands, and thinks she is praying to God and offering worship to Him,—an idea which the author seems to think is most wild, and utterly out of the question; yet I confess that is the plan I always follow when I am in London. I spend the afternoon in calling, and seldom miss the five o'clock service: indeed my young footman Thomas takes care I shall not; he is so pleased to go too, that he always gives me a hint when it is getting near five o'clock: but I am afraid that being followed into church by a footman will only increase my condemnation. I have certainly always the dress on I have been wearing for my calls, and jewels on my hands, which I would not part with for twenty times their value. But that hour in church is to me the happiest in the day, and I don't quite see why going there

should, as the book says, make us still more like heathens than if we stayed away."

"Happily for you, and for all of us," said Mr. Herbert, "we have not to be judged by the author of your book, or by any man. David's request, 'Let me fall into the hands of God, and not into the hands of men,' may well be ours, so far as man's judgment is concerned. I certainly see no reason why a civilized Christian woman should not offer her evening service to God in His temple, if she has been trying to do her duty to God and man in her daily work, whatever that work may have been; she certainly can't get strength to do it rightly without His help and grace."

"But spending the afternoon in calling does seem a vain and profitless way of employing one's time: don't you think so?"

"I don't at all see that it necessarily is so," said Mr. Herbert; "it entirely depends on the way in which it is done. A woman has her duty to do to God and to her neighbour, just as much as a man has; and in order that she may do that duty she must have intercourse with her neighbour. A man has it in the way of his business: a woman can't

have that, but still her part in the work seems marked out : and to her naturally belong the civilities or (to speak in accordance with St. Paul) the courtesies of life ; and these can and ought to be done as her duty to God and to her neighbour. As to 'calling' (as we term it), it may, as you say, be only a vain and frivolous way of passing away time, and one utterly unworthy of a Christian woman : light and foolish talking and 'jesting which is not convenient,' backbiting and unkind words, envying and strife, too often form the chief part of the conversation : visits spent in efforts to outvie one another, and in discussions on matters which have no important bearings on our life in this world or in the next, may well be called a waste of time, and can only produce results destructive to any right, or godly, or charitable feeling. But if women can cease to think that it is the bonnets and dresses that are coming to see other bonnets and dresses, and can remember that their intercourse with one another is between one mind and another, or rather between the souls of two beings who ought to be looking forward to spending an eternity together with the same

God, I don't see why profitable and Christian intercourse and communion should not be as well held in a lady's drawing-room as in a work-room of the Home of a Sister of Mercy, or the attic of a poor woman. As I said just now, when we were talking of almsgiving, I think we limit our idea of charity too much to ministering to those of our neighbours who are poor. Christ says, 'I was sick, and ye visited Me;' and there is many a rich person who when sick is surrounded by comforts and luxuries, but who still needs our visits, and kind sympathies, and gentle words quite as much as a poor person can do. If we are really trying to do our duty to God and our neighbour, the wealthy and rich will receive our sympathies and love, alike with the poor, for the sake of Him who died for both. The conversation between ladies of equal rank may, I think, fully come up to St. Paul's requirement, 'Only let your conversation be as becometh godliness.' I don't mean that sacred subjects should be discussed,—*that* would generally be out of place,—but that the topics may be such as '*becometh* godliness,' and are so in unison with God's will, that any allusion to holy subjects may not seem strange or ill-suited to the

tone of the conversation. How much real kindness and *neighbourliness* might, in the best sense of the word, be shown in such intercourse! There is many an aching heart under a rich dress, and many a troubled brow beneath a gay bonnet; and if one woman could freely talk of her perplexities, and cares to one in her own position and circumstances, she could hardly find an adviser and sympathiser who would better understand and cheer her. But no doubt selfishness stands in the way of this Christian communion, and makes the intercourse of civilized ladies what it too often is,—merely an invention for passing away time, and, worse still, an opportunity for finding faults in others, and for efforts to exalt self and depreciate our neighbours. I am satisfied it is far more easy to exercise Christian charity when visiting those who by their position and capabilities are avowedly our inferiors, than those whose positions or talents excite our envy or covetousness; and that it is more agreeable to give our pity and attention to one who looks up to us as a humble recipient, than to one in our own rank, who perhaps comes upon us unexpectedly, and seems to have no right to intrude her troubles

upon us, and who does so in an uninteresting way."

"You remind me of my own impatient feelings," said Mrs. Leslie, "when (as the door opens, and a caller is announced) instead of a friend with whom I have expected a pleasant gossip, an old lady appears, who is full of her small troubles and worries, and recounts them in such a wearisome manner, that I find it most difficult to listen patiently; and yet I feel quite ashamed when she wishes me 'Good bye,' and thanks me for my 'kind sympathy,' and tells me she 'always goes away after talking to me feeling cheered and comforted.'"

"And surely," said Mr. Herbert, "we may humbly believe that our Lord, who acknowledges a cup of cold water only, will look upon any little act of kindness as done to Himself. We can't suppose God really *requires* anything that we have, either for His poor, or for any work done for Him. He could in one moment supply every bodily want of every sufferer on the earth, but He graciously allows us to do the work for Him, and counts it as done to Himself: and we have no right to limit that work to attending to the bodily wants of His poorer members. 'I

was hungry for sympathy, and ye gave it Me ; ' ' I was thirsty for kind and cheering words, and ye spake them to Me ; ' ' I was sick at heart, and ye ministered to Me, ' may apply to those who are surrounded by every outward luxury ; and who that has tried both will not say that spiritual and mental needs and troubles are not sharper and harder to bear than bodily ones.

" I have often been struck with the beautiful manner in which women's duty seems to be pointed out, by the example of the holy women of the New Testament,—the quiet, unobtrusive manner in which they performed their duties equally to rich and poor, and in different ways, according to the circumstances in which they were placed. It bears very much on our present subject, to remember that the first miracle worked by our blessed Lord was at a marriage feast ; and that He did not perform it to cure the sick, or even to supply the necessary wants of His disciples, but to provide a *luxury* for his fellow-guests ; and that He did so at the request of His mother, who was anxious on the subject of hospitality. Then, though He rebuked Martha for over care and anxiety in her domestic affairs, He shows that He did not wish her to

disregard them ; for He afterwards went to a supper at the house at Bethany, and sat at meat there with Lazarus and others ; while Martha was allowed to gratify what was evidently her natural wish, and to attend to the bodily wants of her beloved relatives and her honoured Guest. Mary's attention was equally accepted by Him, whether she sat at His feet and quietly listened to His Word, or poured on His head the precious and costly ointment which (like many of our efforts) was considered by the lookers on as a waste of what ought to have been 'given to the poor.' The women attended Him up the hill of Calvary ; and their fortitude and endurance sustained the sight of those hours of suffering, from which the disciples shrank away. *Their* sympathy and tears did 'what they could' to soothe the last hours of that Holy One whose death has sanctified every death-bed since ; and the womens' hands performed those last offices which are now so lovingly and tenderly fulfilled for their own departed ones. *Their* love would not desert the sepulchre, and *they* had the blessed privilege of welcoming their Lord to His risen life. I think that each duty here mentioned is perfectly compatible with every

station a woman may be in ; and so are all the injunctions of St. Paul, and of the other writers, where women's duties are mentioned : and St. John's letter to 'an elect lady' might well be written to a 'Belgravian lady,' supposing she were one, who, with her children, walked in the truth, 'after the commandment received from the Father.' No, no : in spite of your Author, or of any man living, a woman may dedicate her day's doings to her God, albeit those doings have been with the rich and great, instead of with the poor and feeble. But if she kneels before God, and knows that her visits to her (so-called) friends have been made occasions for envy and covetousness, for spite and ill-will, for trying to exalt herself and her possessions, and to lower her neighbour, by any of those numerous and ingenious means, in which a woman so often employs the 'fine and delicate qualities' which God has given her for such different purposes ; if, when she looks at her dress, she knows that her dressmaker ought long since to have been paid for it, and that therefore the money in her purse (which possibly she intended to drop into the bag for the poor) is not honestly her own ; then let her 'Go her way, first be

reconciled to her neighbour,' and then come to ask forgiveness for the past of a merciful Father, and strength for future duties. But surely none will dare to say that because a woman is well dressed, and occupying a high station in life, she cannot be a lowly and a needy suppliant before God? If any one does so judge, it must truly be 'man's judgment' by 'outward appearance only.' To obey St. Paul's injunctions 'to rule the house,' 'to bring up children,' 'to lodge the stranger,' to 'show hospitality,' to 'give none occasion to the enemy to blaspheme,' must require as much grace from God in a large house as in a small one; and it may possibly be *more* difficult to rule an establishment of servants than a home for sisters of mercy."

"I don't know what the difficulties of ruling a sisterhood are," said Mrs. Leslie; "but it seems to me almost impossible to rule a household as 'to the Lord.' Something is wrong in the relations and feelings between employers and servants; but I suppose I must not again say it is the fault of our 'civilization'?"

"I believe the fault lies in the want of earnestness in our own work for God," said Mr.

Herbert. "If our servants could but see that we recognised, and acted upon the belief that we have a Master in heaven, and that to see that they fulfil their duty to us is part of our service to our Master, then a common interest would spring up between us, on the highest grounds; and, as members of the same household, we should be working together for the same Master. But it is inconsistent in us to expect faithful service from them, when they see us unfaithful in our service. Their work is capable of being done to God: does not my old namesake George Herbert say, 'She who sweeps a room as to the Lord, makes *it* and the action fine'? The work of both mistress and servant is the Lord's; and to the Lord they will have to give account, whether the work is ruling the house or serving in it,—'showing hospitality' or cooking the food."

"I suppose," said Mrs. Leslie, "you would say, as a gentleman did one day, when I was expressing surprise that he cared so much about his dinner being badly cooked: he asked me, sharply, 'If I thought God gave us good food to be spoilt in cooking?' And when one thinks about it, it cannot be wrong to believe that God

intended food as a pleasure as well as a necessity for man."

"I don't see how we can think otherwise," said Mr. Herbert. "In the garden of Eden He gave variety of food ; and after man was condemned to work to make the earth yield her increase, the return for his labour was still food pleasant to the taste ; our blessed Lord certainly did not set us the example of despising the feasts to which He was invited. He tells us 'He came eating and drinking ;' and through the whole of His ministry we find Him 'sitting at meat' with one or other as their Guest. The marriage feast (as we have said) was His first public appearance. He went to the house of Zacchæus, and to that of another chief Pharisee, where many were feasting ; He was sitting at supper, when a woman who was a sinner stood at His feet, and again when the precious ointment was poured on His head ; we have seen that Martha prepared for Him, and waited on Him ; and He ate the Paschal Supper with His disciples, and for ever sanctified eating and drinking by making them the means of our union with Himself. After His resurrection He still shared with His disciples in their meals ;

and has pictured to His believers their future happiness, by the type of the marriage supper of the Lamb. Like everything else in our state of preparation here, eating and drinking may be done 'to the Lord;' but it is so often made the means of self-indulgence and sin (not only in the grosser ways, but also as giving occasion to impatience and idleness and selfishness), that eating and drinking have come to be considered self-service only, and it is thought a sign of grace to despise or disregard them, and no attempt is ever made to sanctify them to God. I was told the other day that 'grace' before or after meals was now being left off, as considered 'out of place,'—another proof how much we are in the habit of separating the idea of God from His good gifts; and making our civilized life, and our Christian life two distinct ideas. If our servants feel, with cause, that they are kept to minister to our self-indulgence and self-glorification,—that our feasts are only occasions for trying to out-do, or to out-shine our neighbours,—that the entertainments at which they have to attend, are not gatherings together for friendly intercourse and refreshment, and for the enjoyment of innocent pleasures, upon which God can

look with approval as the natural expression of the spirits of the young and light-hearted ; but are prepared for, and engaged in, as opportunities for vain and frivolous display, for envy and emulation, and unkind and spiteful feelings,—can we wonder that their service to us should be like ours to our Master, faithless and unprofitable ? But if our life shows that we consider every blessing and gift (whether of food or raiment, for use or for decoration) as bestowed by God for the benefit of man, and to be used by him in the best possible manner, then our servants will feel that they are fellow-workers with us ; an interest in our concerns and property and wishes must follow ; and they will see that their work and ours may find favour with God. We have St. Paul's authority for saying that 'whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, all can be done to the glory of God.'"

"But I fear we are very far from doing all to the glory of God," said Mrs. Leslie. "I wonder how one could *dress* to the glory of God : it seems almost impossible for a woman to do so in these days."

"I think, as far as I can see," said Mr. Herbert,

“that in dress as in everything else, the idea of God is too often separated from all that is considered beautiful in this world. If we consider that God in His goodness has made the looking on bright colours or lovely designs to be a pleasure to us, and has surrounded us with materials which by man’s work can be made to afford us real enjoyment, we must believe that He intended us to use them both for the adornment of our persons and of our houses. The Old Testament fully warrants our feeling that God has Himself pleasure in harmony of colour and arrangement: ‘The blue, and the crimson, and the purple, the pomegranates, and the knobs, and the tassels,’ were all explained to Moses, and a heavenly pattern was given to Him to imitate; and I don’t see why women, to whom God has given a particular liking and taste for beauty and colour, should not indulge in them, and ‘give God thanks.’”

“But you don’t think,” said Mrs. Leslie, “God really cares how we are drest?”

“I believe He cares for and notices the spirit and temper of mind that are shown by dress,” said Mr. Herbert; “and I must confess that I can’t but think that the folly and vanity of

what we call 'fashion' must be displeasing in His sight. There is, I think, even worse feeling than folly and vanity shown : I mean 'envying and strife' and contention as to which should outvie the other,—nothing else can account for the extravagancies and absurdities one sees when each seems to be trying to make herself more outrageously ridiculous, or even deformed, than her neighbour. If the mind and plan of God were more recognised the effect would be different. He arranges all with a view to the refreshment of man's eye, and the variety is infinite, we can hardly find two flowers exactly alike, in shape and colour ; no two blades of grass with the same veins, or trees of the same form ; or even two scents of the same nature and strength. But instead of His creatures exercising their taste, and discernment, in trying to properly appropriate the materials that He has given them to their proper use, the design of civilized women seems to be to produce uniformity, and *that* often of a kind devoid of all beauty or taste. I am often glad the arrangement of nature is not left in the hands of our fashionable ladies, or we should certainly have the flowers all of one colour for

'the season;' and I think even possibly the trees planted with their roots upwards."

"You are almost as severe as my author," said Mrs. Leslie.

"Well, I doubt very much if an artist would not tell you, that a woman often produces quite as much deformity in the way in which she arranges her dress, as there would be in the poor trees being treated as I say; but *novelty*, and not beauty or variety, seems to be the point desired, and whether the effect is good or appropriate is not taken into consideration."

"But it is said that the demand for novelties tends to increase and support trade, and so employs our workmen, and you have contended that this is the best way of showing charity in a civilized country," said Mrs. Leslie.

"I doubt whether the demand for vain and frivolous novelties has any good effect on our trade," said Mr. Herbert. "But, again, an old parson must be careful not to get beyond his depth, in talking of things he does not understand; so I will only say that as far as one can tell from an outside view, one would be inclined to think that if really good, substantial, and

artistic articles only were produced, it must be better both for manufacturers and purchasers. If we could but have the desire to make the most and the best of the materials with which God has enriched His creation, our workmen might be taught that their work could be done to Him ; but it is impossible they can feel they are labouring for any but low ends and unworthy purposes, if they are only ministering to our vanities and follies. I cannot but think that good and earnest work must be more profitable to man, as well as more pleasing to God. I have often heard the remark, 'It is better to give more money in order to secure a good article.' I know it is advice that I always give to my school-girls, and to the mothers of families; and the principle of the thing to our manufacturers must, I think, be wholly different,—whether that is they are working to make the best and most valuable article, or merely one to gratify a vain and frivolous fancy, and what is in itself even unsightly, and unworthy to take a place among God's beautiful creations."

"Do you think," said Mrs. Leslie, "that God has given every one power to appreciate beauty? Some seem utterly devoid of it: indeed there

are some who really seem to admire most what has no beauty or grace in it."

"I believe," said Mr. Herbert, "that very few are left entirely without the appreciation of beauty that you speak of; but of course (as we have been saying) God gives it in greater or less degree, though I think naturally very few are without feeling pleasure in colour or beauty. How a baby's eye is at once attracted by brightness, and how generally children show delight and enjoyment in what is in itself lovely. God has given great variety of tastes, and made varieties of beauty in order to gratify the tastes which He has given. But the system of the present education of young people is to lead them simply to fall in with, and to approve of what is said to be 'the fashion,' and not to exercise and cultivate their own tastes and talents, either as affording pure enjoyment to themselves in the appreciation, and use of God's materials or works, or as means of helping or sympathizing with others. It has become so strong a feeling with many really earnest minds, that dress or ornamentation is apt to lead to temptation and sin, that to despise and disregard all such 'vanities' (as they are called) is considered as a part

of a Christian's duty. But I am contending that, living as we do and must live in a civilized nation, our duty is to endeavour to Christianize that civilization as much as is in our power, and that we should do well to educate our children to associate God with all their doings, and with every talent and gift and blessing which He has bestowed upon them. If this principle were more carried out, I cannot but think that the young people who are soon to be the chief workers in the world, would perform their duties in a different spirit to that which we now so often have to deplore. The young men of the present day are, I fear, but little taught or accustomed to associate the thought of God either with their work or their pleasures. Religion is looked upon as distinct and separate from this world's pursuits. If a young man is intended for a clergyman or for a doctor, he feels it is possible to serve God acceptably, and to live so as to please and to glorify Him : but in any other profession or business, religion is a separate affair,—to be attended to on Sunday, and to receive more or less attention on week days, according to the capabilities or circumstances of the individual concerned ;—his *work* in life

as a merchant, a tradesman, or an artisan is to improve trade, to increase the wealth of the nation and of himself; and his *pleasure* is in science, or art, or music, or the like, which he looks upon justly as innocent and intellectual enjoyments, but still as enjoyments belonging to this world only; he has never been taught to believe that God cares for, or delights in man's workmanship or designs; or that any discoveries or inventions of man can, or ought to be the means of raising the mind to God. Surely one cause of the Atheism and Scepticism of which, alas, we hear too much in the present day, is that young men are thus accustomed to separate the thought of God from all that most interests and pleases them in their lives in this world: 'God is not in all their ways.' I remember just after I left Oxford, travelling with a College friend, whose religion was of a peculiarly earnest and simple kind. We had been travelling in haste,—what is now called 'doing Italy and Switzerland' in as short a time as possible,—getting up early in the morning, and arriving at our hotels tired out late at night. We were passing a wayside chapel one evening, and my friend observed, as

we saw the poor people going into the little building, 'We have been hurried in our own devotions lately ; but it is of less consequence just now, as our whole life seems full of God.' I confess my conscience told me a different story. I had been uneasy at the neglect of my usual devotions, but I had never thought (as he had evidently done) of acknowledging and praising God through His works, or even of associating Him with all we had been seeing and enjoying. I believe that the more our young people could be taught to acknowledge and find God in all His works, and to cultivate and dedicate their talents so as to serve Him by their means, the more Christianized our civilized nation would become. We might then hope that our workmen might be made to feel that articles are valuable according to their real beauty and use, and that therefore their work could be dedicated to the great Creator of all this world's materials ; and that our servants would see that their employers were fellow-servants with them under the same great Master, who delights in the order and regularity of His household. Then I think our civilized nation would be in a state in which all could find opportunity of serving

and glorifying God, of learning more of His will and mind, and of becoming more and more fitted to live with Him for ever in the home which He has prepared for us in heaven. Thus to sanctify our civilized life seems to me should be the aim of every Christian, according to the power or influence he may possess ; but to give up in despair (as it were), and to feel that because such employments as eating and drinking, dressing, and entertaining our friends, are so often turned to occasions of evil, and are so full of temptation that therefore we must deem them unworthy of a Christian's attention, and incapable of being associated with God, and that we must renounce them altogether, is, I think, serving our God like slaves who are fearful of incurring punishment, by breaking any of the laws of their hard master, and who therefore give up all innocent enjoyment rather than run any risk of bringing upon themselves His anger or of being punished by Him."

"That certainly does seem the spirit in which this little book is written," said Mrs. Leslie : "it tells us that Christ did die for us ; but I think that if we believe all that the author says, we can hardly venture to hope that we can benefit

by His death, or escape the hell which we feel our sins deserve. In the way in which the matter is put, it seems to me, that there is only one conclusion we can come to: namely that there is no everlasting punishment, and that therefore—

“Hush: stop!” said Mr. Herbert, almost sternly. “If the book suggests any such thought, put it away at once. I ought not (and will not) judge any book unread; but I know there is much written now which, under the colour of Christianity, is calculated to shake our faith in the Christian religion altogether. I have no reason for saying that the doctrines in this little book are of this poisonous character: I truly hope they are *not*. That there is an everlasting punishment we are plainly told by our God Himself; but we are *as* plainly told it was prepared *not* for man, but ‘for the devil and his angels:’ and no man will be sent there, or separated for ever from His loving God, and Saviour, but by his own will and deed; ‘For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.’ I believe the most dreadful part of the punishment will be the knowledge that this life has been thrown away and wasted, and

that a home in heaven has 'been prepared' for all from 'the foundation of the world,' and that man has been placed in this world to fit himself to live with God for ever. We have not to save *ourselves* from hell, or to gain heaven : the same God who created us has redeemed us, and has purchased for us a home with Himself. But I am not talking to one who is ignorant of the elements of religion ; or explaining how it is that God, in the Person of Christ, has made us His own children, and heirs of eternal life. My object this morning has been to clear away (or to attempt to clear away) your doubts as to the possibility of a Christian who truly desires to lead a holy life being able to do so, and to serve God, in a country civilized as ours is, and surrounded as we are by all the refinements and comforts and luxuries which such civilization necessarily brings. I don't know how far I have succeeded in meeting your difficulties."

"I certainly see my way more clearly than when you came in," said Mrs. Leslie, "though I think it is possible that if I began to read this little book again some of my doubts might return. I wish you would take it with you and read it, and let me know what you think of it."

“I will do so if you wish it,” said Mr. Herbert; “and I daresay when we meet again, that we shall have to talk on deeper and graver subjects than we have done this morning. I think from what you have already told me of the book, that it is calculated to arouse thought in its readers, and so far it must be useful. We all need urging to lead more earnest lives, and often to consider whether we are using the blessings of God as He intends us to do, or making them serve as instruments for our sin here and for our destruction hereafter. We shall do well frequently to call to mind that chapter in Revelation, where the fearful end of Babylon is described, as the type of the doom of all those who have devoted the gifts and blessings and glory of this world to the service of their own sinful lusts and wicked desires; we read there, that ‘the kings of the earth, who lived deliciously in her, shall bewail and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and precious stones, and pearls,—in one hour so great riches are come to naught! Thus shall the great city Babylon be overthrown, and shall be found no more.’

“But that it is the abuse, and not the use, of the riches, and the luxuries of this world which will bring on us this fearful doom, may I think be seen by turning to nearly the next chapter of Revelation, where St. John tells us that he beheld the ‘new Jerusalem, the city of God,’ coming down from heaven, arrayed in every outward kind of glory and splendour. ‘The building of that city,’ says the glowing description, ‘was of jasper, and the city was of pure gold, clear as glass; and the foundations were garnished with all manner of precious stones; and the gates were of twelve pearls; and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it, *and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it.* And the gates shall not be shut at all by day, and there shall be no night there, and *they shall bring the glory and honour of all nations into it.*’

“It is my firm and humble belief” (said Mr. Herbert, as he rose to take his leave) “that God wills and intends us all so to live here, that we may be fellow-citizens of that glorious city above; and that all the beauty, and culture, and refinement, and civilization, by which we are surrounded, may, if we are rightfully using

them, be (so far from hindrances) our greatest helps in our service to God here, and in teaching us how to understand, and to enjoy that life which we shall spend in the eternal city of God. 'Blessed are they who keep His commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and enter through the gates into the city.'"

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